

Foundation Newsletter

Issue 3

NATIONAL
FOUNDATION FOR
AUSTRALIA-CHINA
RELATIONS
澳中基金会



Overview

Thank you for being a Friend of the Foundation. Please enjoy issue three of our newsletter.

In the first quarter of 2023 the National Foundation for Australia-China Relations continued to support practical and resilient engagement with China. We have expanded engagement with a range of stakeholders that promote the contributions of diverse Chinese communities to Australian society. We would like to thank our colleagues and partners for their continued support and look forward to another productive year ahead.



Foreign Minister Wong, Gabrielle Wang, and Jennifer Wong spoke at the second annual Wang Gungwu Lecture in 2023

FOUNDATION ACTIVITIES

Wang Gungwu Lecture 2023

On 31 January, the Foundation hosted the second Wang Gungwu Lecture in partnership with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC).

Named after pre-eminent Australian academic and expert on overseas Chinese communities, Professor Wang Gungwu AO CBE, the lecture promotes the substantial and longstanding contributions of Chinese Australians to Australian life.

Foreign Minister Penny Wong delivered a video address saying that “for over 200 years, Chinese Australians have made enduring contributions to Australian life.”

This year’s keynote speaker was Gabrielle Wang – author, illustrator, and Australian Children’s Laureate for 2022 and 2023. Gabrielle delivered a heartfelt keynote speech on her experience as a Chinese Australian. As an author and illustrator, she creates characters from diverse cultural backgrounds to reflect modern Australian society. The event was hosted by writer and comedian, Jennifer Wong.

The Foreign Minister’s address is available to view [here](#).

The lecture is available on ABC iview [here](#).

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

The Foundation supported Melbourne Symphony Orchestra’s (MSO) 2023 ‘East Meets West’ concert. Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs the Hon Tim Watts delivered the keynote address, highlighting the MSO’s long relationship with China, noting their commitment to growing cultural networks and providing opportunities for Chinese Australians to stay connected with their ancestral cultures.

Alongside the Chinese New Year’s concert, Foundation CEO Peter Cai, together with Minister Watts, witnessed the signing of a new three-year partnership between the MSO and the Sichuan Symphony Orchestra. The agreement will create new opportunities to collaborate and exchange.



Assistant Foreign Minister Watts and CEO Peter Cai at the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

Meeting with Chinese Ambassador Xiao

In March Chairman Pru Bennett and CEO Peter Cai met Chinese Ambassador to Australia Xiao Qian to discuss the Foundation's activities and scope for practical Australia-China collaboration for mutual benefit. The Ambassador and Foundation discussed future collaboration, including on dialogue, climate change and culture.



Foundation Chairman Pru Bennett with Ambassador Xiao Qian

GRANTS WITH A FIRST NATIONS FOCUS

New Ambassador for First Nations People

The Foundation welcomes the appointment of Mr Justin Mohamed as Australia's inaugural Ambassador for First Nations People. Mr Mohamed will lead the Office of First Nations Engagement within DFAT. The Foundation looks forward to engaging with Mr Mohamed and will continue to embed a First Nations focus in our activities.

First Nations Grants

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA

The National Museum of Australia in Canberra has produced the Ochre and Sky exhibition. It features an immersive film adapted for a Chinese audience showcasing the diversity of the Australian continent and the Indigenous concept of Country. It will tour China later this year.

NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA

The National Gallery of Victoria established the Community Ambassador Program to engage international students with communities and enhance understanding of Australia and Indigenous Australian culture.

CHARLES DARWIN UNIVERSITY

Charles Darwin University introduced a cultural immersion program for international students in the Northern Territory to learn about Australia's First Nations cultures. The two-year program began in August and includes a series of 'My Unique Story' seminars on sharing cultural knowledge and experience.



International students at Charles Darwin University learn about Australia's First Nations cultures

FINUCANE & SMITH THEATRE COMPANY

Victorian theatre company Finucane & Smith began an integrated performing arts program in Australia and China. It facilitates collaboration between Chinese artists, Chinese Australians, and Indigenous Australian performers. Their production of 'Lady and the Whale' later this year will be performed in English, Mandarin and Mudburra, and will tour to the town of Marlinja in the Northern Territory.

REPORTS

Australian Academy of Humanities

On 11 March, with Foundation grant support, the Australian Academy of Humanities launched its report into Australia's China Knowledge Capability.

The report draws on consultations with more than 100 China experts and empirical data to map Australia's current knowledge capability against its needs. It calls for a national conversation about how Australia can best pursue its interests, including the handling of risk, by knowing China better.

Read the report [here](#).

GRANT HIGHLIGHTS

- We have distributed over \$12 million to more than 90 grantees, with more to come after the upcoming 2022-23 grants round.
- The Foundation strives to improve the quality of applications and in March conducted over 50 feedback sessions with unsuccessful applicants. These sessions are valuable for the applicants to improve future applications and to build our stakeholder network.
- For information on grant recipients to date, [visit our grants page](#).

The Australian Film Institute

The Foundation is sponsoring 'The Drover's Wife: The Legend of Molly Johnson' in the 2023 Beijing International Film Festival.

This is the first Australian First Nations film to be selected for the festival, which will take place on 17-26 April.

Watch the trailer [here](#).



Promotional poster for 'The Drover's Wife: The Legend of Molly Johnston'

The Lowy Institute

In December the Foundation joined a Lowy Institute roundtable on Australia-China economic challenges and opportunities, with representatives from state government and industry. The roundtable was part of the Foundation's support to Lowy for research and delivery of business workshops on Australia-China trade and economic issues and followed publication of the Lowy Institute's report "Chinese Coercion, Australian Resilience" in October.

Australia China Business Council (ACBC)

In February the Foundation participated in the ACBC's Future Battery and Electric Vehicles Forum in Melbourne. Keynote addresses were delivered by the Victorian Minister for Energy and Resources the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP and Secretary-General of the Beijing Zhongguancun New Battery Technology Innovation Alliance Mr Yu Qingjiao.'

Participants discussed battery storage technologies and practical applications in new energy vehicles and infrastructure. This forum was part of the ACBC's Green Channel, supported by the Foundation as an over-arching framework designed to elevate engagement with China on

trade and investment opportunities in support of clean energy transition.



ACBC Forum in Melbourne

The University of Melbourne

The Foundation supported the University of Melbourne and AustCham chapters to host its 'Doing Business in China' launch event. The event focused on investment and trade opportunities for Australian businesses following the release of the 2022 report.

The University of Melbourne – Centre for Contemporary China Studies

The Foundation and the University of Melbourne Centre for Contemporary China Studies (CSSS) jointly hosted the 'My Study and Life in Australia' short video competition. The contest invited Chinese students studying in Australia to record and share their stories via video. Themes covered academics, Australian society, personal life and experiences.

View two of the winning entries [here](#) and [here](#).



A decision I made five years ago has changed my life. What happened in the past five years of studying abroad? This video dives into the bitter-sweet memories of my life in Australia.

A winning video entry on study in Australia

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Events

In March Chairman Pru Bennett delivered the keynote address at the Australia China Business Council's International Women's Day Luncheon. Pru spoke about her extensive experience working across financial sectors and in greater China and Asia. She is a leading member of the 30% Club in Hong Kong - part of the global campaign to see greater representation of women with Asia experience on corporate boards.



Pru Bennett at the ACBC International Women's Day Luncheon

In January the Foundation celebrated Lunar New Year, the most important festival in Chinese culture. 2023 is the year of the rabbit, which represents hope and life, and is said to be the luckiest of all 12 zodiac animals. View Prime Minister Albanese's Lunar New Year message [here](#).



Acknowledgement of Lunar New Year celebrations shared on Foundation social media

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Qingming Festival**, 5 April
- **UN Chinese Language Day**, 20 April
- **Darwin International Dragon Boat Festival**, 4-5 June

FURTHER READING

- [Australia China Stories book - 50 vignettes from individuals who form the fabric of the Australia-China relationship](#)
- [Australia's 'life-changing' program on kids' health reaches regional China](#)
- [Chinese Australian Professor Lily Xiao develops Chinese language app to support carers of people with dementia](#)

DID YOU KNOW?

The Chinese community established in Beechworth, Victoria during the gold rush played an important role in Ned Kelly's life. Kelly said in 1880, 'I would rather trust my life to them than any European living'. Prominent Kelly historian, Ian Jones, said in 2002 'an omission from my biography of Ned, which I would like to rectify in a revised edition sometime, was the role of the Chinese which I wish I had given proper emphasis. The Chinese played a very significant part in the Kelly story.'



Chinese migrants in Victoria during the gold rush